

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0308

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, AG, MO, SS, US

SUBJECT: F-5S FOR MOROCCO

REF: RABAT 0606

1. RABAT'S PRESENTATION IN REFTEL OF RATIONALE BEHIND VIEWING OUR AGREEING TO SELL TWENTY-FOUR F-5S TO MOROCCO AS REPRESENTING CONTINUITY RATHER THAN CHANGE SOUNDS LOGICAL, AT LEAST WHEN VIEWED IN ABSTRACT. ITS VERY PERSUASIVENESS IMPELS US TO WARN AGAINST TWO DANGERS WHICH WE SEE POSSIBLY ARISING FROM IT.

2. FIRST DANGER: ERRONEOUS EXPECTATION THAT ALGERIANS WILL ACCEPT THIS RATIONALE. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SALE OF F-5S TO MOROCCO WILL BE COMING AT TIME WHEN TENSION HIGH BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO, WHEN MOROCCAN F-5S STRIKING AT POLISARIO AND ALGERIAN FORCES WHILE ALGERIAN MIGS REMAIN GROUNDED, WHEN ADMIRAL TURNER'S TALKS WITH KING HASSAN AND KARIM-LAMRANI'S MEETING WITH SECRETARY HAVE JUST ENDED, WHEN WE HAVE IN WASHINGTON

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STATEMENT PUBLICLY RE-EMPHASIZED OUR CONTINUING

COMMITMENT TO MOROCCO, AND, PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, WHEN ALGERIAN CAUSE IN SAHARA AT LOW EBB. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE, ALGERIANS WILL VIEW F-5 ANNOUNCEMENT, TOGETHER WITH OUR UN VOTE, AS DECISIVE, CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF US SUPPORT OF MOROCCO AT THIS MOMENT OF CONFRONTATION.

3. SECOND DANGER: SELF-DECEPTION. WHILE ON BALANCE WE BELIEVE PROCEEDING WITH SALE IS MISTAKE FOR REASONS WE HAVE SET OUT BEFORE, WE CAN UNDERSTAND US TILT TOWARD MOROCCO FOR VARIETY OF REASONS -- COMMITMENT TO HASSAN, MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY, MILITARY TRADEOFFS, DIPLOMATIC TRADEOFFS, ETC. INDEED, BEING ONES WHO HAVE TO DEAL WITH ALGERIANS ON DAY-TO-DAY BASIS, OUR GUT SYMPATHIES ALIGN WITH SUCH ORIENTATION.

4. NONETHELESS, WE NEED TO BE CLEAR IN OUR OWN MINDS THAT, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, SALE OF F-5S AT THIS TIME OF HIGH TENSION DOES NOT REPRESENT SIMPLY CONTINUATION OF ON-GOING PROGRAM. TO ANNOUNCE SALE OF F-5S NOW, WHEN DEAL IN WORKS SINCE 1973, WHEN MOROCCANS THEMSELVES HAVE BASED PITCH FOR PLANES PARTIALLY ON NEED FOR DEMONSTRATION OF US SUPPORT VERSUS ALGERIA, WHEN FULL SCOPE OF MOROCCAN MILITARY HARDWARE REQUEST AND OTHER ACTIONS REQUESTED OR SUGGESTED CONSIDERED, IS TO CREATE NEW DIMENSION TO OUR MILITARY AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HASSAN AND TO INTRODUCE NEW INGREDIENT INTO OUR RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA.

5. WE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN TO ALGERIANS HOW PROVISION OF F-5S IS SIMPLY PART OF OUR ON-GOING MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO. WE HAVE MADE SIMILAR PRESENTATION BEFORE. IF WE CALLED UPON TO DO SO AGAIN, WE WILL DRAW UPON ARGUMENTATION IN REFTEL IN PREPARING CASE.

6. WE WANT TO BE SURE, HOWEVER, THAT NO ONE HAS ANY ILLUSIONS EITHER THAT ALGERIANS WILL BELIEVE OUR PRESENTATION, OR AS TO WHAT F-5 SALE DECISION DOES REPRESENT IN OUR POLICY. LYNE

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